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SUBJECT: EPA, DEFRA Seek Work-Sharing on Chemicals
Regulation; Discuss Nanotechnology, Pesticides

¶1. (SBU) Summary: On September 18, EPA Assistant Administrator for Prevention, Pesticides and Toxic Substances Jim Gulliford discussed with DEFRA's Chemicals Director John Roberts ways that EPA can share work with the UK on assessments and characterizations of chemicals. Implementation of REACH, a new EU chemicals management program, will cost the UK one billion dollars according to Roberts. Oversight of nanotechnology is at the early stages, and one of the lessons learned by DEFRA is the need to assure careful management of proprietary information. UK EU PermRep Ann Lambert is shortlisted for Director of the European Chemicals Agency. End summary.

Sharing Assessments Through OECD Chemicals Program

¶2. (SBU) Roberts said that the UK is very interested in finding efficient ways to get the information they need for assessing and characterizing the environmental and health effects of potentially dangerous chemicals and substances. EPA's Gulliford said that EPA shares that interest and would like to explore ways to share information and test data so that expensive testing would not have to be duplicated. Roberts and Gulliford agreed that one possibility would be to exchange data under the rubric of the OECD Chemicals Program. Roberts added that the UK is strongly interested in reducing the amount of animal testing. Martin Ward, Director of Policy at the UK's Pesticide Safety Directorate, who also attended the meeting, supported the work-sharing idea, saying that it could save a lot of unnecessary repetition.

Focus on Chemicals of Concern

¶3. (SBU) Roberts described the UK's green/yellow/red "traffic light" system that focuses their attention on the "yellow light" chemicals that are neither clearly safe nor clearly dangerous. It is in that group, Roberts said, that rapid, effective testing can make a difference. EPA's Charlie Auer, Director of the Office of Pollution Prevention and Toxics who accompanied Gulliford, said that EPA is conducting research to establish relationships

between results obtained from a suite of "rapid screen" lab tests and results from available toxicity studies so that potentially toxic chemicals can be identified quickly. Such a tool could be used to identify and target what studies are needed, and to avoid unnecessary animal testing. Roberts acknowledged that animal testing is major issue in the UK and expressed interest in the approach. On mercury, Roberts said that it is clear that a portfolio of flexible solutions has to be developed to handle the various affected sectors, despite the interest of "hardliners" in a single, binding convention.

Government Needs Nanotech Information from Industry

¶4. (SBU) Roberts said that the UK needs to cooperate with industry to understand and properly regulate nanotechnology, but that industry is wary of sharing sensitive proprietary information in the absence of strong protections for the confidentiality of such information (voluntary submissions in the UK are subject to their "FOIA" requirements). In addition, government has to do more outreach and education of the many smaller firms in nanotechnology that are not familiar with government reporting practices, he said. Roberts added he also has to do outreach within government to explain the benefits and potential risks of nanotech.

REACH Compliance Will Cost UK \$1 Billion

¶5. (SBU) Roberts said that the UK would like to participate more in the OECD Chemicals Program but his small Chemicals Office is overwhelmed with demands related to REACH implementation. He estimated that REACH compliance would cost the UK \$1 billion. He did not have any comments on REACH, saying only that the effects of REACH on trade, production and benefits to the environment are unclear.

Brit Shortlisted for European Chemicals Agency

¶6. (SBU) Roberts said that UK Deputy Permanent Representative to the EU Anne Lambert is one of two candidates shortlisted as director of the fledgling European Chemicals Agency (EChA) in Helsinki. A preliminary indication on her candidacy is expected in October, Roberts said. See Lambert's bio at <http://ukrep.be/deprepcv.html>.

¶7. EPA cleared this cable.

TUTTLE